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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/837,852	04/18/2001	Brian Mark Shuster	409475-27	9134
23879	7590	05/19/2006	EXAMINER SMITH, JEFFREY A	
BRIAN M BERLINER, ESQ O'MELVENY & MYERS, LLP 400 SOUTH HOPE STREET LOS ANGELES, CA 90071-2899			ART UNIT 3625	

DATE MAILED: 05/19/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/837,852

Applicant(s)

SHUSTER, BRIAN MARK

Examiner

Jeffrey A. Smith

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 March 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,5-12 and 14-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,5-12 and 14-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 April 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

The response filed March 7, 2006 has been entered and considered.

Claims 1-3, 5-12, and 14-17 are pending.

Claims 4, and 13 have been cancelled.

Claims 1, and 9 are currently amended.

An action on the merits of claims 1-3, 5-12, and 14-17 follows.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-3, 8-12, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Kahn (U.S. Patent No. 6,135,646).

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Kahn discloses a method for managing virtual properties (col. 2, lines 17-46) comprising: maintaining an inventory in a centralized database (col. 5, lines 61-63); allowing transfer of ownership (col. 6, lines 32-46); maintaining updated records regarding ownership (col. 6, lines 29-31); and allowing property owners to use but not possess digital copies of said respective virtual properties (col. 5, lines 66-col. 6, line 7). The inventory may be searched (col. 8, lines 6-16) and records regarding ownership are updated by association of an owner with a property (col. 4, lines 25-35). Items not already in inventory may be added (col. 4, lines 46-56).

Kahn similarly discloses a system having the above-noted functionality.

The "wherein" clauses inserted in each of claims 1 and 9 has been considered. Such clauses are given little patentable weight in distinguishing each of the method claim of claim 1 and the system claim of claim 9 from the method and system already disclosed by Kahn. This is because none of the "wherein" language moves to further modify or further distinguish steps or structure already positively recited in the bodies of these claims.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 5-7 and 14-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kahn et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,135,646) in view of Martinez et al. (WO 98/47091).

Although Kahn et al. discloses transfer of ownership, Kahn et al. does not detail such transfer as by selling, trading or winning (as in a game).

Martinez et al, however, in a virtual environment supporting the use and transaction of virtual property (page 3, lines 1-11), teaches that virtual property may be sold, traded or won (see page 23, line 15-page 24, line 3).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have provided the method and system of Kahn et al. to have included the selling, trading, and winning of virtual

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property in order to have established traditional features of ownership and property rights in a virtual realm (such as in the computer network of Kahn et al. (see Martinez et al. at page lines 2, lines 14-24)).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed March 7, 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant's remarks directed to Kahn failing to disclose or suggest the features recited in the "wherein" clauses inserted into claims 1 and 9 have been addressed above in the body of the rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action

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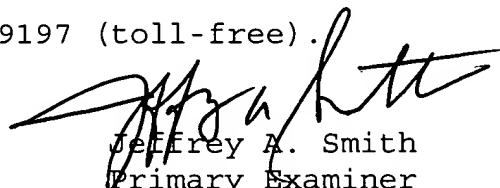
is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeffrey A. Smith whose telephone number is (571) 272-6763. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 6:30am-6:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wynn Coggins can be reached on (571) 272-7159. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Jeffrey A. Smith
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3625

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